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Embargoed until 10.00 Hrs (CET)  
Wednesday, 8 June 2005

## SLOVAK HEALTH SYSTEM AMONG WORST IN EU, SAYS NEW POLL

A new survey of public attitudes to the future of healthcare, conducted by Populus for the Stockholm Network think tank, shows that on the overall measure of delivery against aspirations for healthcare, Slovakia ranks its system among the worst of any country surveyed, above only Poland.

More people in Slovakia believe their healthcare system to be underfunded than in any other of the 11 EU countries surveyed, including 3 other new member states. More than three-quarters (76%) believe this, including 81% of 15-24 year olds and 83% of 25-34 year olds.

On specific, key performance measures, Slovakia performs below the average on every measure:

- On the time taken between diagnosis and treatment, fewer than one in six (15%) give the Slovak system a 'good' rating
- On access to the latest medicines and technology, fewer than a quarter (24%) say their system is good.
- Slovakia's overall Delivery Deficit is 67%, second to last ahead only of Poland.

Most important features of healthcare and health systems' ability to deliver them		
	Important	Good
The time between diagnosis and treatment	96	15
Being treated at a time and a place to suit you	95	24
Having enough information to make an informed choice about your treatment	95	24
Being treated using the latest medicines/technology	94	24
Being treated by a doctor of your choice	89	49
<b>AVERAGE DELIVERY DEFICIT</b>		

When it comes to the prospects for reform. Slovaks believe that giving patients more information about their illnesses is more likely to increase standards of care than any other reform they were asked to comment on. More than two-thirds (70%) believe this, including three-quarters (75%) of 15-44 year olds. Over two-thirds believe increasing the number of medicines and treatments would help including three-quarters (74%) of 15-44 year olds. A clear majority (by 58% to 35%) also believe that giving patients more control over public spending on health would improve healthcare quality. Slightly less than half of Slovaks (49%) believe extending the range of doctors and hospitals is likely to lead to greater quality, but this is still slightly larger than the 45% who do not. The country is more evenly divided about the effect of making it easier for patients to supplement health spending from their own income. 47% believe this would help against 45% who do not.

Reforms most likely to increase the quality of care			
	Likely	Not likely	Net
Giving patients more information about their illness	70	25	45
Increasing number of medicines and treatments	67	26	41
Giving patients more control over public spending on health	58	35	23
Increasing range of doctors and hospitals	49	45	4
Making it easier for patients to spend their own money on health	47	45	2

-ENDS-

#### NOTES TO EDITORS

- *Poles Apart? Eastern European attitudes to healthcare* by Helen Disney (ed.) is published by the Stockholm Network priced £10. The Stockholm Network is a unique service organisation for Europe's market-oriented think tanks and thinkers. A full PDF file of the survey can be downloaded at: [www.stockholm-network.org](http://www.stockholm-network.org).
- The survey findings for Slovakia will be launched to the media on Wednesday 8 June at 10.00am at the Palfy Palace, Pálffyho palác, Zámocká ulica 47, Bratislava. The event is jointly hosted by the Health Policy Institute and the Stockholm Network. RSVP to Peter Pazitny (pazitny@hpi.sk).
- Populus conducts monthly polls for *The Times* among other clients. It interviewed 1000 people representative of age, gender and region in each of Poland, Hungary and Slovakia over the phone between 17 January and 7 February 2005, and in each of the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain and Sweden over the phone between 26 January & 22 February 2004.